

Message Text

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PAGE 01 RABAT 05998 130934Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 AGR-05 EB-07 COME-00 SWF-01 TRSE-00

OMB-01 CIAE-00 INR-05 NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02 HEW-02

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P 130903Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4019

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FOR NEA/AFN MONTVILLE

PASS USDA

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EPAP MO

SUBJECT: PROBLEM WITH USDA INSPECTORS IN NEW YORK OVER MOROCCAN CITRUS

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EXPORTS

1. AFTER YEARS PREPARATION, INCLUDING VISIT BY WORLD TRADE COUNCIL TEAM TO INSTRUCT ON TECHNIQUES FOR MARKETING IN US AND LOCAL SUPERVISION OF FUMIGATION PROCESS BY USDA INSPECTOR FRANK AVERILL, MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT AGENCY OCE ON DECEMBER 2 SHIPPED BOATLOAD OF CITRUS TO NEW YORK CITY CONSIGNED US FIRM CASTLE AND COOK. PRESENT SHIPMENT WORTH MILLION AND A HALF DOLLARS. CONTRACT CALLS FOR AT LEAST FIVE MORE SHIPLOADS AT HEIGHT OF ORANGE PICKING SEASON.

2. ECOUN TODAY SUMMONED BY FONMIN TO BE TOLD DISASTER HAS STRUCK. AFTER UNLOADING AND DISTRIBUTION OF THREE-FOURTHS INITIAL SHIPMENT FOLLOWING USDA APPROVAL, SECOND INSPECTOR ARRIVED TO HOLD UP FURTHER UNLOADING. AFTER CAREFUL INSPECTION, HE ALLEGED TO HAVE GIVEN SECOND APPROVAL. THIRD INSPECTOR THEN ARRIVED AND STOPPED UNLOADING ON

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PAGE 02 RABAT 05998 130934Z

GROUNDWOODEN CRATES INFECTED WITH PARASITE.

3. MOROCCAN CONSULAR AUTHORITIES HAVE INVESTIGATED AND ARE CONVINCED THAT "BUGS" ARE POLITICAL NOT BIOLOGICAL. CASTLE AND COOK SAID TO HAVE REPORTED THAT UPON RETURN TO US AFTER SIGNING CONTRACT IN MOROCCO, FIRM SUBJECTED TO INTENSE PRESSURE FROM ANTI-ARAB GROUP TO CANCEL CONTRACT. GOM CONVINCED THAT SUBTERFUGE HAS NOW BEEN FOUND TO STOP IMPORTS BY INDIRECT MEANS.

4. EMBASSY HAS NO INDEPENDENT MEANS OF JUDGING CORRECTNESS ABOVE VERSION EVENTS. BUT WE VIVIDLY AWARE IMPORTANCE OF STRICTLY FAIR TREATMENT IN BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONSHIP WITH MOROCCO AT TIME OF STRESSFUL NEGOTIATING BETWEEN GOM AND SEVERAL MAJOR US INVESTORS. IN VIEW HIGHLY PERISHABLE NATURE CARGO AND PENDING SHIPMENTS, URGE USDA INVESTIGATE IMPARTIALITY LOCAL RULING AND ISSUE URGENT INSTRUCTIONS REGARDING STEPS TO BE TAKEN TO AVOID FUTURE PROBLEMS.

5. MOROCCANS ASSERT WOOD IS SAME TYPE AND ORIGIN USED IN TRIAL SHIPMENT LAST YEAR AND IS IMPORTED FROM SAME SOURCES (MALAYSIA AND SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA) BY US FIRMS FOR CONSTRUCTION IDENTICAL CRATES.

6. DESK PLEASE MONITOR STEPS TAKEN AND KEEP US INFORMED DEVELOPMENTS URGENTLY.
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